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Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS) Project: 101128611 — reZEB

Fostering Renewable energy technologies and energy Efficiency knowledge towards near Zero Energy Buildings of engineers and professionals in Western Balkan Countries

DELIVERABLE 2.2: Project Network

Table of Contents

1. Project information, document control sheet and versioning history

Project information

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2. Introduction

Project Background

The reZEB project "Fostering Renewable Energy Technologies and Energy Efficiency Knowledge Towards Near Zero Energy Buildings in Western Balkan Countries" aims to modernize higher education curricula in the region, with a focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency. By developing advanced modules and integrating best practices from EU universities, reZEB seeks to equip students and professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the region's growing demand for sustainable energy practices. This initiative targets capacity-building in academic, technical, and administrative areas across Western Balkan institutions.

Objective of the Network Report

The primary objective of the Network Report is to document the establishment, growth, and impact of the project's network, which links academic institutions, industry partners, and public bodies to advance near-zero energy standards. This network fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the fields of renewable energy technologies (RETs) and energy efficiency (EE) in buildings. By detailing the contributions and synergies among members, the report demonstrates how the network promotes high-quality education, supports industry standards, and strengthens curriculum modernization in alignment with EU energy goals across Western Balkan institutions.

3. Project Network Overview

3.1 Purpose of the Network

The project network plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and resource sharing among key stakeholders, including academic institutions, industry leaders, and public bodies from the partner countries of Albania and Kosovo. By connecting these entities, the network supports the reZEB project's goals of promoting near-zero energy building standards through advanced education and training. This collaborative environment encourages the alignment of academic programs with industry needs, supports the integration of cutting-edge renewable energy and energy efficiency knowledge, and ensures the long-term sustainability and impact of the project across the Western Balkans region.

The project network for the reZEB initiative was carefully developed based on insights gathered through a needs assessment phase. During this phase, we conducted detailed questionnaires targeting key stakeholders in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors (widely described in Deliverable 2.1. Analysis of the survey results). The responses from these questionnaires highlighted institutions and organizations most relevant to the project's goals of curriculum modernization and near-zero energy standards.

During the needs assessment phase, a significant number of stakeholders expressed strong interest in joining the project network. Their positive responses underscored the alignment between their expertise and the project's objectives in advancing renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. This enthusiastic engagement from stakeholders confirmed the relevance and potential impact of the network, as it brings together diverse, committed partners who are well-positioned to contribute to curriculum modernization and capacity-building efforts across the Western Balkan region.

By selecting network members aligned with identified needs, the project ensured that the chosen academic, industry, and public partners bring essential expertise and resources, facilitating a

collaborative environment. This strategic selection allows the project to address regional energy challenges effectively, foster knowledge sharing, and drive innovation in sustainable building practices.

3.2 List of Network Members

Table 1. List of Network Members

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4. Project Network Communication Tools

4.1 Project Website

The reZEB project's website serves as a comprehensive platform for communication, providing regular updates, resources, and critical information to both network members and the public. It offers easy access to project news, event schedules, training materials, and reports, ensuring transparency and consistent engagement. The website also acts as a knowledge hub, hosting modules, guides, and policy documents related to renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. This facilitates knowledge sharing and strengthens collaboration among stakeholders. Project network members have been informed about the project website and are fully committed to collaborating and engaging actively with project partners. They are dedicated to maintaining open communication, sharing resources, and participating in discussions that foster mutual support and knowledge exchange within the network. This commitment enhances the project's impact and supports the ongoing development of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives across all member institutions.

4.2 Annual Newsletter

- In line with our commitment to transparency and engagement, the reZEB project will feature a dedicated section in its **annual newsletter**, which is distributed twice a year, to inform network members about key activities and progress. This section will serve several important purposes:
- **Highlighting Key Activities**: Each edition of the newsletter will provide updates on significant activities undertaken by the project, including workshops, training sessions, and stakeholder engagement events. This will allow network members to stay informed about ongoing initiatives and opportunities for collaboration.
- **Showcasing Member Contributions**: The newsletter will feature contributions and success stories from various network members, illustrating how their involvement enhances curriculum development, practical training, and knowledge exchange. This will help foster a sense of community and shared purpose among stakeholders.
- **Upcoming Events**: We will include a calendar of upcoming events and training sessions, encouraging active participation from network members. This proactive approach will help members plan ahead and take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered.

5. Key Activities and Contributions

5.1 Training and Workshops

In the upcoming years, the reZEB project will continue organizing workshops and training sessions to further develop the skills of network members. Planned activities will include hands-on technical training in cutting-edge renewable energy technologies (RETs) and energy efficiency (EE) for building systems. Academic staff from partner universities, alongside industry professionals, will collaborate on curriculum advancements and practical applications. The project network aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry by promoting technology transfer and fostering innovation within industrial companies. This includes:

1. **Internships and Practical Experience**: Project Network members will offer student internships, facilitating technology transfer and equipping students with industry-ready skills.
2. **Professional Development**: Specialized training in Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) will support continuous learning for professionals, helping energy companies diversify and enhance their operations.
3. **Expanding the Network**: By the project's end, around 40 companies, 10 additional universities, and 12 government and local authorities will join, strengthening the academic-industry-government collaboration.

5.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Network members, comprising industry and academic partners, play an essential role in reZEB project activities by contributing expertise and resources that enhance curriculum development and employability initiatives. Industry partners provide insights into current trends, ensuring curricula meet labor market demands, while academic partners contribute to research and instructional design. Together, they support hands-on learning through internships, workshops, and mentoring, fostering student readiness for the workforce. This collaboration strengthens the project's impact by aligning educational programs with practical industry requirements, enhancing graduate employability and sector innovation.

6. Expansion of the Network

Moving forward, the project will broaden its network to include a diverse range of new members from industries, academic institutions, and policymaking bodies. This expansion will involve:

- **Industry Integration**: Attracting companies specializing in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable building practices to strengthen applied learning and technology transfer.
- **University Partnerships**: Collaborating with additional universities in the region to extend the reach of curriculum modernization and enhance research partnerships.
- **Engaging Policymakers**: Inviting government and local authorities to participate actively, ensuring policy alignment and supporting regulatory advancements in energy efficiency standards.

This strategic network growth will enhance the project's long-term impact by creating a sustainable ecosystem that integrates education, industry, and public policy efforts.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	
EE	Energy efficiency
RETs	Renewable energy technologies
Rev.	Revision
reZEB	Fostering Renewable energy technologies and energy Efficiency knowledge towards near Zero Energy Buildings of engineers and professionals in Western Balkan Countries
UCLM	University of Castilla-La Mancha
UEC	University eCampus
UET	European University of Tirana
WP	Work package
WPL	Work package leader